

Message Text

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12

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FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6184

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION OECD PARIS

UNCLAS EC BRUSSELS 7392

EO 11652 NA

TAGS: PGOV, EEC

SUB: PRESS BRIEFING BY EC COMMISSION PRESIDENT ORTOLI

ON DECEMBER 17-18 EC COUNCIL MEETING

1. SUMMARY: SPEAKING TO THE PRESS AT THE REGULAR EC COMMISSION NOON PRESS BRIEFING ON DECEMBER 19, COMMISSION PRESIDENT ORTOLI SAID THAT THE FAILURE OF THE DECEMBER 17-18 COUNCIL MEETING TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE REGIONAL FUND DID NOT BY ITSELF REPRESENT A COMMUNITY CRISIS. HOWEVER, HE SAID, THE COMMUNITY WOULD BE ENDANGERED IF NO DECISION WERE TAKEN BY EARLY JANUARY. ORTOLI WAS DEFENSIVE ABOUT COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING AND STRESSED

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THE NEED FOR GREATER COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEMBER

STATES TO WORK OUT COMPROMISES PERMITTING IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS. END SUMMARY.

2. ORTOLI BEGAN BY RECALLING GHE COPENHAGEN SUMMIT DECISION TO ESTABLISH THE REGIONAL FUND. HE SAID THAT PERHAPS THE FEW DAYS

BETWEEN DECEMBER 15 AND DECEMBER 17 HAD BEEN TOO SHORT A TIME TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE SIZE AND DETAILS OF THE FUND. IT WOULD BE A "MATTER OF UTMOST GRAVITY", HOWEVER, IF THE DECISION TO ESTABLISH THE FUND WERE CALLED INTO QUESTION. REGIONAL DISPARITIES WITHIN GHE COMMUNITY EXIST AND A COMMON EFFORT WAS CALLED FOR TO DIMINISH THEM.

3. IT IS FASHIONABLE NOW, ORTOLI SAID, TO SAY THE EC HAD MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN 1973, BUT JUDGMENT ON THIS SHOULD BE WITHHELD UNTIL JANUARY. IT WAS ALREADY EVIDENT BY MID-1973 THAT SOME OBJECTIVRS COULD NOT BE REACHED THIS YEAR, E.G., THE RETURN OF THE UK AND ITALY TO THE SNAKE, THE POOLING OF RESERVES. THESE DIFFICULTIES SHOULD BE TERMED "FACTS", NOT "FAILURES" OR "SINS". THE COMMUNITY'S TASK, HE ADDED, IS TO CHANGE FACTS.

4. IN 1974 THE MAIN OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE TO CHANGE THE WORK HABITS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, FOR IT IS IN THE COUNCIL THAT EC DECISIONS ARE TAKEN. MORE POWER SHOULD BE ACCORDED THE EC PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO ALLOW THEM TO SETTLE LESS CRUCIAL ISSUES. COMMISSIONERS IN VISITS TO CAPITALS SHOULD TAKE ON THE ROLE OF CATALYST FOR DECISIONS CHICH TAKE ACCOUNT OF NATIONAL POSITIONS.

5. ORTOLI SAID SUMMIT MEETINGS OF HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT SHOLD NOT SUPPLANT OTHER EC INSTITUTIONS OR OPERATE AS "A KIND OF SUPER-COUNCIL". SUMMITS SHOULD BE USED ONLY TO GIVE FRESH IMPETUS TO THE COMMUNITY'S PROGRESS. THE COPENHAGEN SUMMIT HAD HAD TWO GOOD RESULTS: A. THE DEFINITION OF THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY, AND B. THE STATEMENT ON ENERGY. ON THE LATTER POINT, ORTOLI SAID THE SUMMIT STATEMENT CONTAINS THEMES AND PROPOSALS FORMULATED BY THE COMMISSION.

6. IN THE QUESTION PERIOD ORTOLI REITERATED THE NEED FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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A REGIONAL POLICY AS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT IN THE INTERNAL ECONOMIC SOLIDARITY OF THE COMMUNITY. HE ADMITTED THAT THE BENEFITS TO THE UK FROM EC MEMBERSHIP MAY NOT BE IMMEDIATELY VISIBLE, BUT SAID THE EC AND THE UK " CANNOT DO WITHOUT EACH OTHER". ORTOLI SAID THE COMMISSION WOULD NOT MODIFY ITS PROPOSALS ON REGIONAL POLICY AT THIS TIME BUT WOULD LOOK FOR WAYS TO CONCILIATE NATIONAL INTERESTS (E.E., DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND

THE GERMANS).
GREENWALD

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